Career Transition Center

George P. Shultz
National Foreign Affairs
Training Center
U.S. Department of State

CTC NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2007

Inside this issue:

Feature Story: Changing Careers? Change Your

Resume!

Editor's Notes 8

1

Job Leads 11

INVITATION

In this newsletter you are invited to participate in 3 exercises designed to benefit all CTC clients.

We hope you will share your knowledge and experience with us and your colleagues on these topics:

- 1.Career change resumes
- 2.Synonyms needed
- 3. Transferable skills

We will publish your contributions in subsequent issues of the newsletter.
Thank you in advance for your assistance!

CHANGING CAREERS? CHANGE YOUR RESUME!

- Written by the Career Transition Center Staff, January 2007



Over the years, the CTC has had the pleasure of working with some really interesting Career Changers – people who have left a 20 to 40 year career with the USG to become motorcycle mechanics and safety instructors, special education teachers, personal trainers, personal counselors and coaches, adventure travel guides, landscape architects, yoga instructors, artists, novelists, horse trainers, historic preservationists, dog show competitors, and other exciting professions. Quite a few clients change their careers unexpectedly after they leave us. We have never compiled their advice for successful changes and are hoping to do so now.

In this article, we are going to start a discussion on how to write a resume for a career change. We are inviting you to contribute your experiences and advice which we will publish in subsequent issues. We are hoping that this discussion will be beneficial to you and to those who follow you.

As you have seen in previous newsletters, we publish your advice and anecdotes anonymously unless you give us permission to use your name. Please send your advice, guidance and/or examples to us via e-mail (pittsa@state.gov) by February 16th.

So, the question posed to you in this issue is: if you have changed your professional direction or are contemplating a change, how did you adjust your resume?

Changing Direction

Did you know that in the U.S. a worker makes 2 to 7 career changes – not job changes, *CAREER* changes! – in his/her lifetime?

Why do U.S. workers change careers so often? There are as many reasons as there are workers who change careers, but here are a few basic reasons:

- The market may change. Cheaper production costs overseas has drastically affected NC textile and furniture industries. Factory workers and CEOs alike have had to change careers. Also, if you relocate, the job market may be very different and you may have to adjust or completely change your career direction.
- Changes in technology and consumer demand can affect an entire industry or professional field. We don't see many job advertisements for Keypunch Operators anymore, do we?
- One that applies to many JSP graduates: personal fulfillment. Many of us are looking for a better work/life balance, new professional challenges and growth opportunities, a better career fit for our personality or our family, or maybe even a chance to contribute in an area of special significance to us.

Many books have been written about the different causes and techniques of this "recareering" phenomena and you can check our Bibliography (www.state.gov/m/fsi/tc) for those. In this issue we are focusing only on the Career Changer's resume.

"We all have big changes in our lives that are more or less a second chance."

> Harrison Ford, Movie Star



Start Fresh!

Nearly all the books and articles on this subject agree on the starting point: toss your old resume and create a new one to take you in a different direction.

In her article "Retooling Your Resume to Change Fields," Barbara Reinhold of Monster.com reminds us that "a resume is a marketing document, not a career obituary. ... This is a cold call, and you're the product." Tom Musbach, a managing editor at Yahoo! Hot Jobs, says a resume is "a billboard, not an encyclopedia." The Princeton Review tells you to "view yourself as a revamped product" and make your resume show "how you've been 'new and improved' through experience, education, and working in [a] very different field."

Wendy Enelow and Louise Kursmark stress the importance of making your resume "interviewable" in their book, EXPERT RESUMES FOR CAREER CHANGERS: "Once the employer has determined that you meet the primary qualifications for a position (you've passed the keyword scanning test or initial review) and you are contacted for a telephone or in-person interview, your resume becomes all-important in leading and prompting your interviewer during your conversation. Your job, then, is to

make sure the resume leads the reader where you want to go and presents just the right organization, content, and appearance to stimulate a productive discussion."



"You must be the change you wish to see in the world."

- Mahatma Gandhi

Detective Work

Do your research on the job, the employer, and the field or industry. Network with professionals in the field. You need know how to sell yourself as an employee who can contribute significantly to the employer's success – even without experience in the field. Your resume needs to tell the employer why s/he should take a chance on you, a newcomer to their field.

In a Career Changers' resume, skills are highlighted more than experience. Use your transferable skills or "universally valued" skills as the foundation of your resume.

Here is a useful exercise suggested by Isaacs and Hofferber:

- Make a list of all the wonderful skills and abilities you have accumulated over your foreign affairs career (and other careers, if applicable).
- Review and compare job advertisements for your Dream Job in order to create a list of the skills, abilities, training, certifications, and experience that are most frequently required in

those jobs.

 Create a two column chart. Write the Dream Job list in one column. Next, match your own skills to each in a second column.

If few match, then you may need additional education and experience in the new field.

It is also important to learn the jargon of your new field and use it in your cover letter, resume, and interviews as it pertains to your experience. Read professional publications, attend professional networking events, take relevant training courses, and interview professionals in the field in order to learn this new language.

Through this research, you will be able to identify "key words" to use in your resume and cover letter. They are the words you see over and over again in the literature. The best place to search for key words is in the job advertisement itself.. Key words can include job titles, skills, computer programs, educational credentials, personality traits, and more. Your knowledgeable use of key words will show the employer that you are not completely ignorant of the profession and they can help to bring your resume to the top of the pile. Many employers now use computer software to scan applications for the key words. The computer will only spit out the resumes that have the key words they are looking for.

"We did not change as we grew older; we just became more clearly ourselves."

Lynn Hall, Where Have All the Tigers Gone?

Resume Format

bination or hybrid resume format for Career Changers - one that combines the chronological and functional format. Before the chronological section, group your transferable skills into skill areas that are relevant to the positions for which you are applying. (Make sure these are essential skill areas for your new career.) Enelow and Kursmark observe that, "The functional style deemphasizes the 'where' and 'when' of your career and instead groups similar experience, talents, and qualifications regardless of when they occurred."

Some career advisors say you should have at least three skill categories to show how versatile you are, then use two to four relevant accomplishments under each area to illustrate your expertise in that area. These selected accomplishments may also help prevent the impression that you are overgualified for the job or have no relevant experience.

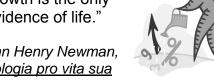
Possible titles for this section include:

- **Highlights of Achievements**
- Related Experience
- Relevant Achievements
- Relevant Areas of Expertise
- **Relevant Career Successes**
- Relevant Skills & Experience
- Selected Accomplishments
- Selected Achievements
- Transferable Skill Set

For those who are making a change to a drastically different career (IT tech to Yoga Instructor? GSO to Floral Arranger?), Kim Isaacs in her Monster.com article, "Resume Dilemma: Career Change," goes so far as to recommend a

purely functional resume format. But even in a functional resume, it is a good Many career advisors recommend a com- idea to include a brief work chronology at

> "Growth is the only evidence of life."



- John Henry Newman, Apologia pro vita sua

the end. Include only the job title, company name, city, state, and dates of employment.

Order & Progress

(No, this is not about the Brazilian flag!)

In THE CAREER CHANGE RESUME, Kim Isaacs and Karen Hofferber recommend thinking of the space on your resume as real estate. Location, location, location is the primary concern. Monster.com claims that resume readers spend approximately seven seconds scanning a resume before assigning it to the pile for consideration or the pile of resumes-never-to-be-looked-at-again. So, that must mean that the top half of the first page is the most important and that your strongest and most relevant expertise should be highlighted there. In fact, The Princeton Review maintains that "the top quarter of your resume is most crucial. The employer should know who you are and what you do within seconds of scanning your resume."

If your new direction is toward a profession or organization that promotes a cause of significance to you personally, then let your passion for that cause show in your cover letter and resume. If your professional experience is not related to

your career goal, but you have been accumulating relevant knowledge and skills in preparation for this change, then highlight that in your resume. This could mean that your Education, Volunteer Experience, and Membership Affiliation sections may appear on the front page of your resume instead of the end.

However you arrange the information on your resume, do not make the employer work to figure out how your 20 years of experience with the Foreign Agricultural Service will make you a good candidate for his/her job! Connect the dots for the employer!



Resume Header

Your name and contact details should always come first. Contact details may include (but are not restricted to):

- Mailing address
- Telephone number
- Cellular telephone number
- Facsimile number
- E-mail address
- Website address



Resume Title & Profile

If you are including a resume title and a profile, they should come next. If you are a Career Changer, the resume title you select has more to do with what you want to do than what you have done and it provides a focus for the content of your resume. It can also eliminate any confusion as to what type of job you are targeting. The best choice may be a professional title, such as Intelligence Analyst,

Image Consultant, Executive Assistant, Dog Trainer, International Trade Expert, or Website Designer. If you are feeling less definitive, other possibilities include titles such as "Career Profile," "Highlights of Experience," or "Summary of Qualifications." We three Counselors who are permanently on staff in the CTC believe that those titles are much less effective and really just a waste of space.

The profile or summary section of your resume can be the most important section because of its placement and content. Your goal with the profile is to capture the reader's attention and show the reader the value you could bring to the employer.

Before you compose a profile or summary for your resume, make sure you know what credentials employers of that type of job are seeking. Then summarize your most marketable skills, credentials, and experience to show how the employer will benefit from hiring you. This section could include very brief descriptions of your:

- Areas of expertise
- Attributes
- Field or industry
- Foreign languages
- Level of experience
- Reputation
- Security clearance level
- Skills and competencies

Some Career Changers also include a list of their top skills in the summary or as a separate section below the Profile.

Remember that this area of your resume is a snapshot of who you are now. You can make a connection between your his-

tory and (hopefully!) your future, but the focus should be on what you have to offer of "Cat Breeder." Also make sure that it an employer now.

you want to use in the future.]

However you structure your snapshot, everything in it must be substantiated in your professional history and accomplishments.



Objective Statement

Some Career Changers include an objective statement on the first page of their resume. It can be used in place of the resume title or in place of the profile. It can be included in the profile. And it can be included as a separate section in addi- [your previous profession]." tion to the resume title and profile.

Keep the objective very concise and be sure to include the profession or job title, the field or industry, and your areas of specialization.

Depending on where you place it, the objective statement may not need a title. Titles for the objective could be:

- Career Focus
- Career Objective
- Career Target
- Focus
- Goal
- Objective
- **Objective Statement**
- **Professional Objective**
- **Vision Statement**

If you do use an objective statement, don't let it limit you to a career goal that is experience blocks on her resume. The too specific - for instance, "Breeder of

Brown Tabby Maine Coon Cats" instead does not read like a personal ad! FSO ISO a career in NASCAR" sounds too [Word of warning: Promote only the skills much like "SWF ISO SWM who loves dogs."

> In a Quintessential Careers article entitled "Career Changers' Most Powerful Resume and Cover Letter Tool: Transferable Skills," Maureen Crawford Hentz recommends this format for what she calls "Transitive Objectives:" (brackets below mine)

> "To use my [number] years of experience as a [professional title] in a [type of employer or industry]."

"Seeking a [type of] position that will effectively maximize my experience in



EXPERIENCE BLOCK

An effective tactic that can be used in a career changer's resume is to write two or more experience blocks, rather than the usual one. The first experience block describes (somewhat limited) experience in the new career field; and the second is a quick summary of past experience most relevant to the new career field.

Let's consider the case of an HR employee who wants to work with animals after retirement as an example. She might best be served by having two first block, EXPERIENCE WITH ANI-

PAGE 6 FEBRUARY 2007



MALS, might include

descriptions of volunteering at the local animal shelwith owning and living with

any formal or

pets, and informal

training she has completed with regard to animals and their care. The second section, OTHER EXPERIENCE, would quickly summarize her work before retirement, citing those accomplishments most appropriate to the position she is seeking. This type of document is what career

counselors call a combination resume both functional (ANIMAL and OTHER) as well as chronological within functions.

Using more than one experience block serves two good purposes for career changers. First, it gets the most relevant experience

up front, where prospective employers

"The only man I know who behaves sensibly is my tailor; he takes my measurements anew each time he sees me. The rest go on with their old

measurements and expect me to fit them."

- George Bernard Shaw

read it first. Second, if the career changer has nothing to put in that new field experience block, that is cause to assess

the strength of her interest in the new career field. Most of us find a way somehow, even with great obstacles facing us, of pursuing our passions. So some self-assessment might be in order before she proceeds further. If she determines that the new field is what she wants, her next

step would necessarily be some training or volunteer experience to bolster a future resume.

Education

If there are aspects of your education that are pertinent to your new direction, you may want to place the Education section of your resume in a prominent position in the resume. Be sure to include even your most basic skills and knowledge of computers and computer programs as well as foreign languages.

[Note Aside: If you do not have good computer skills, then acquire them immediately! Free or reasonably priced courses are offered by local libraries, public school systems, community colleges, and other organizations. In a 21st Century job you must be able to operate e-mail and negotiate the Internet. You should also be confident using Microsoft Word, competent with PowerPoint, and comfortable with Excel.]

Other Sections

Even if your publications and speeches do not apply to your new direction, public

"The most successful people are those who are good at plan B."



- James Yorke

speaking and writing skills are relevant to many jobs. If those skills are among the strongest in your repertoire, if they are among the most important skills needed

in your new career, and if you want to practice those skills in your next incarnation, then mention them at least briefly and place them.

Be sure to list memberships that support your new professional direction. These can be memberships in professional, volunteer, and special interest organizations.

Body of the Beast

In the body of the resume, showing how you used your transferable skills to achieve positive results is more important than describing the job or your duties in it. Use accomplishments that support your new career goal. You will know from your

"To exist is to change, to change is to mature. to mature is to go on creating oneself endlessly."



- Henri Louis Bergson

research which goals to emphasize. Provide only minimal details on jobs that weren't at all relevant to your new goal.

In her book LIFE'S A BITCH AND THEN YOU CHANGE CAREERS: 9 STEPS TO GET OUT OF YOUR FUNK & ON TO YOUR FUTURE, author Andrea Never, ever, lie or mislead! Try to por-Kay advises, "list information on your resume that is relevant and supports your new objective. Does that mean you don't list every single job you've had? Possibly. Does it mean you leave off the first 10 years of your work life? You might.

You need to decide whether the information is relevant and supports your new objective, It might be important to show that you worked during a period, but the details aren't relevant to what you want to

- Administered
- Brought about
- Conducted
- Coordinated
- Designed
- Determined
- Developed
- Directed
- Effected
- Enacted
- Engineered
- Established
- Executed
- Formulated
- Generated
- Governed
- Guided
- Handled

- Headed
- Implemented
- Initiated
- Instituted
- Led
- Monitored
- Operated
- Orchestrated
- Organized
- Oversaw
- Presided
- Produced
- Programmed
- Regulated
- Resolved
- Shaped
- Spearheaded
- Supervised

do now. So you could list the jobs, but



"Growth itself contains the germ of happiness."

- Pearl S. Buck

not go into detail. Be careful not to cross the line between persuasive marketing and lying. Lying includes misrepresenting the number of years you've done something, exaggerating or taking credit for something you didn't do."

tray the skill(s) used for each accomplishment in a way that is applicable to your new professional direction. Wendy Enelow, author of RESUME WINNERS FROM THE PROS, calls it "re-weighting your life experiences ... changing the em-

PAGE 8 FEBRUARY 2007

phasis while still remaining in the realm of ers? If so, please e-mail them to reality."

Summary

- Conduct your research on the new professional direction thoroughly, identifying transferable skills and learning the key words.
- Be sure your career objective is clearly conveyed in your cover letter and resume.
- Write your resume to make it readable and a reasonable length.
- Structure the format to focus attention on your most important selling points.
- Illustrate your transferable skills to make your resume clearly show how you can benefit the employer.
- · Use key words in your cover letter and resume.
- Minimize the space devoted to details that are not relevant to your new professional direction.

[Please check our Bibliography online (www.state.gov/m/fsi/tc) for more details regarding the sources cited in this article and for more resources.1

EDITOR'S NOTES

Synonym Search

When CTC Counselors review resumes for clients, we sometimes find that every other accomplishment statement starts with "Managed." Here are a few other words to express the same action.

(Admittedly, some of the ones we've listed here are a bit of a stretch!)

Can you



pittsa@state.gov. The March 2007 JSP class will be very grateful! And, of course, we will publish them for you all, too!

Transferable Skills

During the October 2006 Job Search Program, a small group of Consular Officers met to discuss their transferable skills. Here is the list they came up with:

Skills Set #1: Transferable

- Leadership and Management
- Com-

munication tems Coor-

dination

Planning

Sys-

Here is their summary of important skills used in consular work and in many other fields!!

- ⇒ Management of systems, staff and customer service while adhering to law and public policy
- ⇒ Ethical behavior in environment of constant temptation/discretionary con-
- ⇒ "People first, paper later"
- ⇒ Mediation
- ⇒ Problem solving
- ⇒ High pressure high stakes experience
- ⇒ Excellent character assessment
- ⇒ Formal and informal decision making
- ⇒ Problem solving in a cross-cultural context
- ⇒ Juggling multiple commitments; prioritizing
- ⇒ HR-related:
 - → Team building
 - → Motivating staff
 - → Dealing with difficult people



- → Training
- ⇒ Crisis assistance/management
 - → Rapid response

"Life is a process of becoming, a combination of states we have to go through. Where people fail is that they wish to elect a state and remain in it. This is a kind of death."

- Anais Nin

- ⇒ Designing and implementing transformation
- ⇒ Management: financial, HR, program, space utilization
- ⇒ Strategic and just-in-time planning
- ⇒ Internal management controls re interpreting and enforcing law and policy
- ⇒ Networking with US businesses
- ⇒ Objectivity (Staff, Clients, Policy)
- ⇒ Negotiating
- ⇒ Managing in chaotic environment
- ⇒ Budget formulation & monitoring

Skills Set #2:

Special Knowledge



"Continuity gives us roots; change gives us branches, letting us stretch and grow and reach new heights."

- Pauline R. Kezer

- ⇒ Leadership and Management
- ⇒ Integration/coordination of systems
- ⇒ Change agent

Skills Set #3:

- Personal Management
- Attributes

Here is their summary of these very important skills used in consular work and many other fields!!

- ⇒ Good judgment
- ⇒ Flexibility
- ⇒ Resilience
- ⇒ Creativity and innovation
- ⇒ Sense of humor
- ⇒ Multitasking
- ⇒ Objectivity

To assist you and future clients, we would like to compile similar lists of skills transferable from the foreign affairs specialties into Real Life. We invite you to participate in this exercise. Consider your own area of specialization, draft a list of the transferable skills based on your experience in the Real World so far. We will combine all the lists we receive and publish the final product to you.

Here are specialized skills used in consular work and other fields.

- ⇒ Immigration law reform
- ⇒ Crisis response/management
- ⇒ Cross-cultural assessment
- ⇒ Communications/media outreach

"God grant me the serenity to accept the people I cannot change, the courage to change the one I can, and the wisdom to know <u>it's me!</u>"

- Author Unknown

Employee Tenure

According to a 2006 study by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. wage and salary workers now stay with an



employer for an average of only four years. Workers in the age group 55 to 64 are likely to stay three times longer in a job (9.3 years) than workers aged 25 to 34 (2.9 years). Public sector employees stay twice as long in a job (6.9 years) as private sector employees (3.6 years).

[Go to ftp://ftp.bls.gov/pub/news.release/ tenure.txt for the whole survey.]

Job Search Resource: Microsoft Templates

If you have Microsoft Office on your home

There is a certain relief in change, even though it be from bad to worse! As I have often found in traveling in a stagecoach, that it is often a comfort



to shift one's position, and be bruised in a new place.

 Washington Irving, American author

computer, Microsoft offers free templates for many job search tools: http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/templates/

My personal favorite is an Excel spreadsheet that tracks resume submissions, networking contacts, interviews, and career web sites where you may have posted a resume. Keeping track of all this

info during a job search is very challenging and this tool might prevent duplicate or mistaken actions. Microsoft calls it a "Job Search Log."

Other templates provided include:

- Business Cards
- Calendars
- Letters including cover, reference, thank you, request for information interviews, etc.
- Lists including references, moving, to-do, retirement, etc.
- Plans including business plans
- Resumes
- Schedules

IMPORTANT NOTE: Please don't tell your JSP counselors that I sent you cover letter or resume templates! That could be hazardous to my health.

MORE IMPORTANT NOTE: Under **no** circumstances should you use the texts of those letters and resumes! Every recruiter in the world has probably seen a million of them and would likely throw your application into the round file! That could be hazardous to your health!

JOB LEADS

Continuing their development of a very popular service, the Career Transition Center (CTC) published approximately 3,000 professional and public service opportunities for the retirees of six USG foreign affairs agencies again in 2006. These opportunities included job advertisements sent to us by employers looking for foreign affairs skills and experience, DC area job fair announcements,

job search resources, continuing education opportunities, networking opportunities, volunteer opportunities, and informational messages.

In addition, to the 3,000 opportunities published to all their clients, the CTC continued to counsel individual clients via email, via telephone, and in person.

Next CTC Job Fair—March 27th

The next CTC Job Fair will be held on Tuesday, March 27th, from 1:00 to 4:00 pm in the gymnasium of Building D (aka Field House) at FSI in Arlington, Virginia. The following employers have already reserved a table:

- Academy for Educational Development AED - www.aed.org
- 2. Allied Technology Group, Inc. ATG www.alliedtech.com
- 3. Carana Corporation www.carana.com
- 4. Computer Sciences Corporation CSC www.csc.com
- 5. Creative Associates International, Inc. CAII www.caii.com
- 6. Crown Agents Consultancy, Inc. CAC www.crownagents.com
- 7. Development Alternatives, Inc. DAI www.dai.com
- 8. Diversity Services, Inc. www.diversitydc.com
- 9. Emerging Markets Group—EMG— www.emergingmarketsgroup.com
- Emerging Technologies Group, USA www.etginc.com
- 11. GlobalCorps (for USAID/OFDA) www.globalcorps.com
- 12. Harlan Lee & Associates www.hlassociates.com
- 13. International Relief & Development IRD www.ird-dc.org
- 14. International Resources Group IRG -

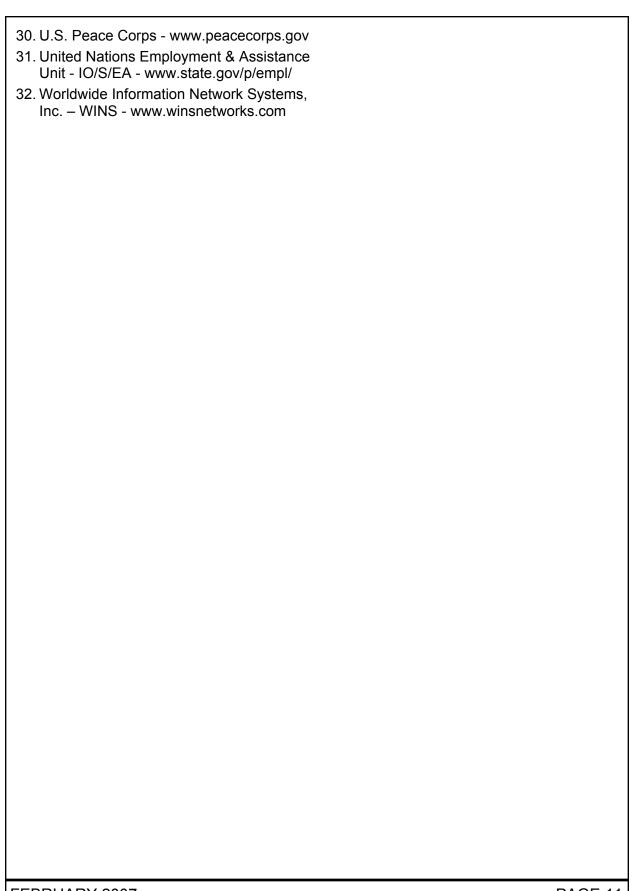


"It takes a lot of courage to release the familiar and seemingly secure, to embrace the new. But there is no real security in what is no longer meaningful. There is more security in the adventurous and exciting, for in movement there is life, and in change there is power."

- Alan Cohen

www.irgltd.com

- 15. John Snow, Inc. JSI www.jsi.com
- KellyFedSecure www.kellyfedsecure.com
- 17. Louis Berger Group, Inc. www.louisberger.com
- 18. Lucent Technologies www.lucent.com
- 19. Management Systems International MSI www.msiworldwide.com
- Northern Virginia Community College NVCC or NOVA - www.nvcc.edu/hr/ employment.htm
- 21. Pact www.pactworld.org
- 22. PAE Government Services, Inc. www.pae-react.com
- 23. Professional Solutions, LLC www.prosol1.com
- 24. PRO-telligent LLC www.PRO-telligent.com
- 25. Science Applications International Corporation SAIC www.saic.com
- 26. The Services Group, Inc. TSG www.tsginc.com
- 27. The Shaw Group www.shawgrp.com
- 28. Software Technology Group STG www.stginc.com
- 29. U.S. Investigative Services USIS www.usis.com



Happy Valentine's Day to our **wonderful** clients! From the Career Transition Center



CTC NEWSLETTER

FSI/TC/CTC U.S. Department of State Washington, D.C. 20522-4201

Also available on the internet at www.state.gov/m/fsi/tc